

HOW HINDU CHRISTIANS GIVE.

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There are a few peculiar facts in connection with the work carried on by your missionaries in India which the Church at home should know. There has hitherto been a misunderstanding in the matter. It is time that it was corrected. The matter that I refer to is the benevolence of our native churches in India.

I have been asked by ministers of our Church within the past few weeks, "Why is it that the native churches in India do so little in the way of benevolence and self-support? Do not the last minutes of General Synod report the whole contributions of the churches of the Classis of Arcot for these purposes to be only \$996.00?" Upon my replying that they are not backward in their benevolence in proportion to their means, the further question was asked, "Do no men of means join you among your converts?" It is to the peculiar facts connected with the solution of these questions that I now ask your attention.

THE RELATIVE VALUE OF MONEY.

The first of these facts is *the difference of the real value of money* in India and America.

I hold before you two coins. The one is a silver dollar, the other is a dime. You notice the difference in size. You know the difference in value. You will doubtless be surprised when I tell you that in purchasing power of food, of clothing, and of labor among the natives, *the dime* in India is worth fully as much as, if not more, than *the dollar* in America. And this fact must be taken into account in estimating the real benevolence of the native churches. But first let me explain the facts.

I said that the dime in India is worth as much as the dollar in America in procuring the food, clothing, and labor of natives. To prevent misunderstanding I must, however, here premise that it is not so as regards the necessaries of life for Europeans. It has been proved by experiments, costly in life and health, that Europeans cannot live in India as natives do. They cannot live in native houses, dress in

native clothing, and live on native food without loss of life or health. We must, if we would retain vigor for successful work, live somewhat in the style, and have somewhat of the comforts, to which we have been accustomed at home. But the moment that we slip outside of the native diet, articles of food become expensive. To illustrate: If we wish oatmeal or hominy for breakfast we must pay 18 cents per pound for it. If we wish a little cheese for a relish we pay 56 cents per pound for it. If we long for a little ham or bacon, now and then, we can be gratified only by paying for it 56 to 62 cents per pound. We have at our station, for years, made our bread of flour obtained from America, costing us there \$12 to \$18 per barrel, and then our bread was as cheap as we could make it from wheat grown in India, for it is not grown in our part of India; and the expensive freight and milling bring the cost up nearly to that of imported American flour. Our clothing, or materials for it, must all be brought out from England, France or America, and on it we must pay freight and commission. So of books, periodicals, newspapers, and all the numberless little necessities and comforts of life. Thus, alas, to your missionaries in India the dollar is worth, in very many things, much less than the dollar at home.

RATE OF WAGES.

But among natives it is different. The dime counts more *in wages* in India than the dollar in America. In Arcot, Vellore and Chittoor, the best bricklayers, the best masons, the best carpenters can be hired for 25 cents a day. Will multiplying by ten secure you the labor of masons and carpenters here? Harvest hands will work all day in India for from 6 to 9 cents, and board themselves. You must multiply by twenty to secure hands for your harvest fields in America. The Cooly women will work all day in the fields or in the house for from 3½ to 4 or 5 cents per day. I pay my gardener and water-carrier \$2.75 per month, and he boards himself, and that is considered high wages. I can hire a man with oxen and cart for \$7.50 per month, and he boards himself and feeds his oxen. The teachers of many of our village schools receive a salary of but \$30 to \$36 per *year*, to support themselves and family. Our highest paid native pastors receive but \$150.00 salary. Not more than two receive that. The most of our native preachers or catechists receive from \$60.00 to \$90.00 per year.

So much for wages. *Board* costs in proportion. I remember a fairly educated single man—who had recently come to Madanapalle—appealing to me in trouble, saying that they ask exorbitantly for board there, and that he could not stay. I asked him how much he had to pay. He told me, with great indignation, that they had the face to charge him \$1.75 per month for his board, and that he had never paid so high in his life before.

As for *clothing*; a fairly well-to-do man's suit, complete, will cost from \$2.00 to \$3.00, and a woman's from \$1.75 to \$2.50. Rich men and women dress extravagantly there as here. Our native preachers make their pastoral calls and preach in suits costing not over \$3.00 to \$4.00. The wedding trousseau of the bride of a native preacher usually costs not more than from \$10.00 to \$14.00. A student can be educated in the Arcot Seminary or the Female Seminary for from \$30.00 to \$40.00 per year, according to age, and that includes board, clothing, books, tuition, and incidentals. Many a father would be glad to have his son's expenses here come within ten times that amount.

You will see at once that the income and the expenditure of our native Christians in India must be multiplied by ten to approximate at all to income and expenditure among our churches in America. You must *apply the same rule to their benevolence*, when comparing it with the benevolence of our home churches. If in this light you will look at the statistical tables on page 701 of the last minutes of General Synod, you will see that the benevolent contributions of the Churches of the Classis of Arcot are not small.

COMPARATIVE BENEVOLENCE OF CLASSES.

The Classis of Arcot is young, and not yet strong. Let us compare its contributions with those of some of the country Classes of the church at home. For this purpose I have taken one Classis from the Synod of New York, one from the Synod of Albany, one from the Synod of Chicago, and one from the Synod of New Brunswick. Each of these Classes is older than the Classis of Arcot. The four Classes I have chosen (one from each Synod) aggregate 6857 communicants, and their contributions for "Religious and Benevolent Purposes" (not for the support of their own ministry) as given in the table, aggregate \$5,309.87, or 77½ cents per member, on the average.

In the same table you will see it stated that the Classis of Arcot, with its 1582 members, gave for the same purposes \$511.00, which is equal to $32\frac{1}{3}$ cents per member, or if you multiply by ten, as is only fair from the above showing, you will find that their real benevolence is equivalent to \$3 23 per member, or more than four times that of the American Classes just mentioned.

GIFTS OF A SINGLE CHURCH.

But in order that we may understand what the native benevolence really is, and what self-denial it requires, let us take a single church in the Classis of Arcot, and analyze its benevolence, and the resources of its members. For this purpose I take the church of Madanapalle, because I know its benevolence, and the circumstances of its members better than I do those of any other church in the Classis of Arcot. That you may verify my statements, I take the report of the Board of Foreign Missions for this last year, 1885-6, which has just been laid before Synod, and which is now in your hands. On page 31, in the statistical table of the Arcot Mission, you will find it stated that the Church of Madanapalle, with seventy-four communicants, contributed for all purposes Rs. 274-15-4. The rupee is worth exactly a half-dollar in silver, and for all purposes of comparison, both in expenditure and income, I have reckoned two rupees to the dollar. Thus calculated, the contributions of the native church of Madanapalle for 1885 would be \$137.48 for the seventy-four communicants. Now, who are these seventy-four members, and what are their circumstances? I know them well. The average income of fifty-five of them would not be over \$30 per year. That of ten others is over \$48 and under \$60. That of eight others is over \$60 and not over \$100. Only one member of that church has an income of over \$100, and his is \$162. The total yearly income of these seventy-four members would then be:

55 averaging.....	\$20=	\$1650.00
10 " 	54=	540.00
8 " 	72=	576.00
1 " 	162=	162.00

Total yearly income.....\$2,928.00

Divide this total yearly income, \$2,928.00, among the seventy-four church members, and you will have the average yearly income of \$39.57 per member, and yet they give for benevolent and church purposes $\$1.85\frac{1}{2}$ per

member, or *nearly one-twentieth of the total income of the members.*

Can you show me one single church in our whole communion in America that gives *one-hundredth* of the income of its members for benevolent and church purposes? If you can, I will go directly to that church and present the missionary cause, assured of a rousing collection.

On page 47 of the Board's Report, it is stated by Dr. William Scudder that the Madanapalle Church has been employing and paying the salary of Abraham (Nannia Sahib)—the convert from Mohammedanism—in evangelistic work among the Hindus and Mohammedans of the "region beyond." He is the missionary of that church, solely supported by them.

Out of the total contributions of Rs. 274-15-4 spoken of above, this little church, only lately gathered in a heathen land, pays to the Pastors' Fund the equivalent of one-half the salary of the Senior Catechist (the unordained native preacher in charge of the church), and *supports its own missionary among the heathen beyond*, and over and above this, contributes out of their poverty \$1.08 per member to outside benevolence.

THE BANNER CLASSIS.

On page 701 of the minutes of Synod before referred to, it is shown that the 83,702 members of the Reformed Church gave last year \$233,996.46 for "Religious and Benevolent Purposes," aside from the support of their own churches. This makes an average of \$2.80 per communicant for the whole Reformed Church. By the side of this place the \$1.08 per member actually given for outside benevolence by the church at Madanapalle, and then multiply it by ten, as shown above, to find their real comparative benevolence, and you have your Hindu Christians giving the equivalent of \$10.80 per member per year as against the \$2.80 per member of the church in America!

Will my friend who asked the question five weeks ago ask again: "Why is it that the native churches in India do so little in the way of benevolence and self-support?"

Does not the Classis of Arcot, tried by the above standard, rather stand out as the banner Classis, and the church of Madanapalle as the banner church of our whole communion? I have spoken of the church at Madanapalle, but the church at Tindivanam and other churches in our mission would make nearly the same showing had we the data to work them up.

HOW THE MONEY IS RAISED.

How is this amount raised among these comparatively moneyless people? Our Christians give until they feel it. The senior catechist at Madanapalle, who has been supported for twenty-three years by the Sabbath-school of the church in Kinderhook, who receives only \$100 salary, always gives in benevolence one-tenth, and often one-eighth of his income, as I well know. He has a family of eight children. One of the higher paid native pastors in our mission, who receives nearly \$150 per year salary, makes one-tenth his minimum, and often gives one-eighth or one-seventh of his income to the Lord. Scores of our native Christians loyally make one-tenth their minimum in giving, and those who have no money give in substance. In many of our Christian families in the villages who have no money to give, the mother, with the consent of all the family, takes out a handful of the allotted grain as she prepares the daily meal, and when Sunday comes makes the family offering unto the Lord in kind.

The pupils of some of our boarding-schools agree to go without a part of the scanty portion of meat that is allowed them only on certain days of the week, and jointly contribute the price of the meat saved in the collection on Sunday. In other of our schools, when the rice is taken out for the mid-day meal by the cook, one of the pupils goes by appointment of the others and takes out so many gills of the rice and puts it into the treasury basket, and on Saturday it is sold and the avails divided around to be put in the collection on the morrow. At a missionary meeting at which I was present, as we were raising missionary money, one member said: "I have no money that I can give, but I have a new milch cow; I will spare one-third of all the milk she gives until she goes dry, if any one will agree to take it daily, and put the value in money in the missionary collection." The milk was at once bespoken, and that cow gave milk well and long that year. A widow woman took off her choicest "toe-ring" (for they use them there as much as finger rings), and put it in the contribution box. It was purchased for half a dollar, and that sum went into the box as the widow's gift.

And other widows give until we sometimes hesitate to take all that they bring to consecrate to the Lord. Our native Christians are not all liberal. There are some who seem to wish to get everything from Christ and give nothing to Him. But your missionaries strive, both by precept

and by example, to teach them the blessedness of giving for the Lord's work *until they feel it*. I know of no missionary who does not consecrate at least one-tenth to the Lord, and we try to bring all our converts up to the same standard; and of very many in our churches we can joyfully say, as did Paul of the churches in Macedonia, "For to their power, I bear record; yea, and beyond their power they are willing of themselves; for their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality."

When this matter is fairly understood the Hindu native churches will no longer be chided for the smallness of their liberality.

NO MEN OF WEALTH.

The second question can be answered briefly: "Do no men of substance join you?" Yes, but their substance does not. No men of position and property have become Christians in our mission without suffering the loss of all things. I could give a large number of instances to illustrate this. I will delay to give but one, and that briefly. It is that of Bala Chetti, a merchant of Palamanair, who was converted in 1865 under Dr. Silas Scudder, then the missionary there. An account of the conversion is given in the Annual Report of the Mission for that year. Bala Chetti was a well-to-do merchant of the town, of high caste and extensive family connections. He was one of several brothers who held an undivided ancestral estate, and carried on their business in common. He had been an inquirer for some months. He finally broke his caste and became a Christian. A mob collected—armed with various weapons—seeking to kill him. He eluded them and escaped to the mission premises. On Sunday, when he went to church with the missionary to be baptized, the carriage in which they went had to be guarded by the police. The church was surrounded and taken possession of by the mob. Only He who restraineth the wrath of man could, and He did restrain that mob. Bala Chetti took refuge for a time at the mission house. When the excitement was somewhat over, he went to his house. His wife had, before this, when he first became a Christian, spat upon him, and gone home to her parents, taking their only son with her. He now found that his brothers had walled up with masonry the entrance to his part of the large common residence. He could only get in by climbing over the scullery gate. He found it deserted and empty. He wished to continue with his brothers in the management of their bazaar. They spat upon him in the streets, and

would not let "this dog of a Christian" enter their place of business. Foiled in this, he brought suit in the Civil Court for the division of the paternal estate, that he might take his share and do business alone, if they would not allow him to keep on with them. His brothers brought in forged documents and perjured witnesses to swear that he had already drawn out and squandered the whole of his share of the estate. Not a witness could be found to testify for this "renegade and outcast." They dared not. The judge openly said he suspected the documents to be forged and the witnesses false, but there was no rebutting testimony, and the case went against him, and his property, that might have been a help to the Christian church, was all gone. He, after a time, brought suit in court for the recovery of his wife. She was summoned and appeared at the District Court. She was asked if she would return to him? "No." Had he not been a kind husband? "Yes." Had he ever abused her or neglected to provide for her and their son? "Never." Why would she not return to him then? "Go with that Christian dog! Never!" Did he not love her and did she not love him? "Yes, before he became a renegade to his ancestral faith; but now he was dead, so far as she was concerned." He lost wife and child and brothers and house and lands and property for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. All was gone but his faith in Christ, but to that he held firm. He remained for a time with the missionary studying the Bible. He could not again be a merchant. He had no capital, and nobody would buy of him if he had. To gain a livelihood he enlisted in the Government police, under a Christian officer. That he might be free from continual insults and persecutions he was sent to a distant district. The cholera swept through that district, and Bala Chetti was taken up. His old friends said, "What a wreck!" They little knew his eternal reward.

From this one representative case you will see how it is that the Church of Christ in newly-entered districts in India is still poor; why our churches must still be helped. But the heaven is working. It is working among the higher classes as well as among the low. The time is coming, it draws near, when multitudes from all classes and castes will join us, and bring their substance with them. Till then let the Church of Christ in Christian countries throw in her help in no stinted measure, and, by the aid of God's spirit, the engineery will be produced that will sweep through India and carry it all for Christ.